

To: Harrison, Melissa[Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov]
From: Brown, Matthew
Sent: Thur 8/20/2015 2:47:28 PM
Subject: RE: questions about upper animas mining area, other topics

Thanks Melissa. I received a similar message from EPA's Lisa McLain-Vanderpool this morning.

Hoping it happens this time. So far, from where I'm sitting, the EPA's response to our queries has been lackluster at best.

Matt Brown

Matthew Brown

Associated Press Correspondent

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From: Harrison, Melissa [mailto:Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 8:05 PM
To: Brown, Matthew
Cc: Mylott, Richard; Daguiard, Robert; Press; Valentine, Julia; Smith, Paula; Gray, David; Zito, Kelly; McGrath, Shaun; Hull, George; Jenkins, Laura Flynn; Colaizzi, Jennifer C.; McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa; Elliott, Dan; Anderson, Jim; Whitehurst, Lindsay; Montoya, Susan; Biesecker, Michael; Denver Bureau; Moreno, Ivan; Banda, Peter; Knickmeyer, Ellen
Subject: Re: questions about upper animas mining area, other topics

Matt-I promise you that a number of our staff members are working on your responses. This remains a top priority. But, as we've all said before, we have been inundated with requests and still need to respond to daily pressing needs for impacted communities. The team on the ground in Durango is working to finalize information gathering for your questions and plan to respond tomorrow. We sincerely appreciate your patience during this process. Melissa

Melissa Harrison

Press Secretary

EPA

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On Aug 19, 2015, at 4:05 PM, Brown, Matthew <MBrown@ap.org> wrote:

Greetings EPA media relations team.

I'm am re-submitting our outstanding questions on the Gold King Mine spill, some of which have been pending for more than a week and remain unanswered despite repeated requests for responses _ and promises from various EPA representatives to deliver the information (samples of EPA responses follow this msg).

I have attempted to remove the few questions already answered and others (such as whether plume was expected to reach Lake Powell) that have been answered by events. I'm also adding more questions that have since emerged. New questions are marked as such.

Please respond in a timely manner. I appreciate that this event started as an emergency. However, it's now been two weeks and some basic questions have yet to be addressed by the agency. I've again CC'd others at The AP who are covering this story and would benefit from any answers the EPA can provide.

I can be reached anytime at 406 696 4213 or by email at mbrown@ap.org

Thanks for your time.

Matt Brown

Associated Press

NEW--Please provide baseline data that's being used to support EPA's statements that "sediment sample concentrations are trending toward pre-event conditions" Please provide this information for multiple locations, including the Durango area or vicinity, the Farmington area or vicinity, and Lake Powell.

NEW— The EPA has built four containment ponds to clean and then discharge continuing runoff from the mine. How long does the EPA expect those containment ponds to remain in place? What other work at the site of the spill is under consideration immediately?

NEW--Is additional work planned for any nearby mines that are interrelated with Gold King? Please provide names of those mines, what work is being considered and any timeline for when it will be conducted.

NEW—What long-term plans for stopping the flow of wastewater from Gold King are under consideration?

NEW—What is the cost estimate for long term-remediation for Gold King (or the Gold King area including other mines)?

NEW—Can the EPA provide an estimate of the cost of its response to the spill to date? Has the EPA set aside any money to deal with this accident on an ongoing basis?

--We were told by Bureau of Land Management that the EPA maintains a database of mines on non-public lands. Can you provide me with an electronic copy of this dataset, preferably in an Excel or comparable file, along with a data dictionary that explains each field and records contained in it?

--Please provide further details on the Administrator's order from last week to cease work on field investigations at other mine sites. Without some context, the order doesn't mean too much to us: how many mine sites will be impacted? Where? Does the order apply to cleanup work that is ongoing or simply investigative work that would come before a cleanup?

--How likely are the contaminants to re-mobilize? How long will this remain a potential problem?

--Mines have been leaking contamination into some of these rivers for many years; will the Gold King spill appreciably increase the contamination load in the sediments for the Animas, San Juan or other water bodies?

--If the contaminants do re-mobilize, what are the chances that they will pose enough of a threat to prompt more drinking water advisories, closing of rivers, etc?

(we have a partial response stating that any additional events would be smaller in scale, but would appreciate more detail)

--Are there any plans to try to remove contamination from sediment? Is that even possible?

--for analytes listed in the tables of data results (including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, iron, barium, etc) can you please provide corresponding EPA water quality criteria?

--had Gold King Mine been designated a Superfund site, what would have been the chances of the spill happening?

--how many mines are currently on the National Priorities List? Can we get a list of those or is there a way to search on the Superfund website?

--is there a gauge of how often resistance to a Superfund designation by local officials has prevented a site's listing?

--was a preliminary assessment ever completed on the Gold King Mine or for a group of mines including Gold King?

--it's my understanding that the EPA has said a water treatment plant estimated to cost \$12-\$17m (and \$1M a year to operate) would be able to clean the water in the Animas. Is that correct? And if so, is it the type of expense that Superfund would cover?

Matthew Brown

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From: Mylott, Richard [<mailto:Mylott.Richard@epa.gov>]

Sent: Sunday, August 16, 2015 11:06 AM

To: Brown, Matthew

Subject: questions about upper animas mining area

Matt—wanted to let you know that I will be helping to get some info together related to Red, Bonita, Sunnyside, etc. starting tomorrow. As I'm sure you can appreciate, our resources have been devoted to the immediate response effort and we will begin working on more in depth questions this week.

Thanks.

Rich Mylott

EPA Region 8

From: StClair, Christie [<mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov>]

Sent: Saturday, August 15, 2015 6:42 PM

To: Brown, Matthew; noreply-subscriptions; Press; Harrison, Melissa; Valentine, Julia; Daguiard, Robert; McGrath, Shaun

Cc: Paulson, Steve; Anderson, Jim; Denver Bureau; Biesecker, Michael

Subject: RE: EPA Statement on San Juan River Data from Gold King Mine Release

Matt,

We've been working on your inquiries, and will try to get you a response tomorrow.

Christie

Christie St. Clair

Office of Public Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

Washington, DC

o: 202-564-2880

m: 202-768-5780

From: Harrison, Melissa [<mailto:Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov>]

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2015 8:33 PM

To: Brown, Matthew

Subject: Re:

Matt-I'm working with the team here to help get you more answers. I'm really sorry for the delay. As you can imagine, we are overwhelmed with requests. Thank you for being so patient. Melissa

Melissa Harrison

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From: Daguiard, Robert [<mailto:Daguiard.Robert@epa.gov>]

Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2015 6:03 PM

To: Brown, Matthew

Cc: Slevin, Colleen

Subject: Re: Statement from EPA Administrator to Regional Administrators RE: ongoing field work at mines

Hey Matt. We're still working on it. Thanks, R.

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